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## Viewing cable 06TELAVIV3440, NEW ISRAELI MOD DG ASHKENAZI OUTLINES HIS GOALS

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- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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| Reference ID                  | Created                          | Released                         | Classification               | Origin                           |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <a href="#">06TELAVIV3440</a> | <a href="#">2006-08-29 16:19</a> | <a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a> | <a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a> | <a href="#">Embassy Tel Aviv</a> |

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null  
Leza L Olson 08/30/2006 10:42:00 AM From DB/Inbox: Leza L Olson

Cable  
Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 03440

SIPDIS  
CXTela:  
ACTION: POL  
INFO: IPSC PD IMO RES ECON RSO CONS DCM DAO AMB AID  
ADM

DISSEMINATION: POL  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:RHJONES  
DRAFTED: POL:MCKEAYS  
CLEARED: DCM:GACRETZ, POL:NOLSEN, ECON:WWEINSTEIN, DAO:DOMEARA

VZCZCTVI306  
PP RUEHC RUEHXX RUCPDO RUEKJCS RHMFISS RHEHNSC

RUEKJCS  
DE RUEHTV #3440/01 2411619  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 291619Z AUG 06  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5966  
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE  
RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 TEL AVIV 003440

SIPDIS

STATE FOR PM A/S HILLEN  
STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA (MAHER), PM, PM/DTCC  
STATE FOR ISN/ECC DIRECTOR (VAN SON)  
PENTAGON FOR USD EDELMAN AND ASD RODMAN  
PENTAGON FOR OSD ISRAEL DESK OFFICER (ANDERSON)  
COMMERCE FOR UNDER SECRETARY DAVID MCCORMICK  
NSC FOR LOGERFO  
EUCOM FOR ECJ5-E POL-MIL OFFICER (KLOTHE)

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SUBJECT: NEW ISRAELI MOD DG ASHKENAZI OUTLINES HIS GOALS

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones. Reasons: 1.4 (b, d).

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SUMMARY  
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1. (C) New Israeli MOD Director General MGEN (Ret.) Gabi Ashkenazi told the Ambassador August 24 that his first priority is complete transformation of Israel's export control system and restoration of U.S. trust in it. He promised to personally involve himself in the legislative process so that Israel's Defense Export Control Act can be passed by the Knesset as quickly as possible. He indicated that he is closely watching the work of the MOD's new Export Control Division. Ashkenazi's second priority is to secure a robust budget for the MOD and IDF. Ashkenazi reviewed preliminary lessons learned from Israel's 34-day war with Hizballah, stressing that the results were not as good as they should have been. He suggested that neither side wants a second fight, but said Israel needs to prepare for one that could include Syria. Ashkenazi stressed that Israel supports Lebanese PM Siniora, and indicated that Israel is grappling with how to lift the blockade on Lebanon while preventing Syrian re-supply of Hizballah. Ashkenazi promised to be as helpful as possible on resolving the UXO problem in affected areas in Lebanon, and in implementing the Agreement on Movement and Access in the Occupied Territories. Ashkenazi said he will remain involved in the routing of Israel's security barrier, and expressed his belief that the western barrier could be completed by the end of 2007. Advised by the Ambassador of the USG decisions to extend loan guarantees but reduce the amount available under them to offset GOI funding of settlement activity, Ashkenazi urged the Ambassador to inform the PM and Deputy PM of the cut. Ashkenazi said he plans to visit the U.S. in September to report on progress on the export control issue, and to thank USG officials who helped Israel during its war with Hizballah. END SUMMARY.

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MOD DG HELPS THE DEFMIN WITH "THE PROBLEM OF THE HOUR"  
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2. (C) Reviewing his goals for the MOD, Ashkenazi said that he spends a significant amount of his time "helping the Defense Minister on the problem of the hour," and on military and security-related issues. Ashkenazi said that he first met DefMin Peretz four months ago, when they discussed the

possibility of Ashkenazi working for the minister. "He was sassing me out," Ashkenazi said. "I was in New York when the war with Hizballah broke out. He called me 18 days into the war and asked me to come, and so I did."

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PRIORITY ONE: RESTORE TRUST IN ISRAEL'S EXPORT CONTROLS  
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13. (C) Ashkenazi said that the first of his main priorities will be to restore the relationship between the USG and the MOD: "I have learned from Toren, Yaron and the others. Our special relationship is very important," he said. Ashkenazi expressed his understanding that there are obligations that Israel has to meet to restore the USG's confidence in Israel's export control system: A) Israel has to pass legislation making the necessary fixes to its export control system; and B) the MOD has to stand up its new export control division. Ashkenazi indicated that there are some "personnel issues" that also must be discussed, but said he would like to discuss them another time. (NOTE: He did not raise the personnel issues after the meeting, or give any indication about what they might be. END NOTE.)

14. (C) Regarding the export control legislation, Ashkenazi said that the control order for dual-use items is ready for inter-ministerial approval and should move ahead quickly. As for the Defense Export Control Act (DECA), Ashkenazi said that he has met with new MFA Director General Aharon Abramowitz twice, and the two reached an agreement on the draft, meaning that it is now ready for inter-ministerial review by a committee headed by the Ministry of Justice. Ashkenazi said the review would have already taken place, but was delayed when Justice Minister Haim Ramon resigned. Ashkenazi talked with the Prime Minister and was told that Acting Justice Minister Meir Sheetrit had been authorized to oversee the review. The review process could start as early as the week of August 28. Ashkenazi said he expects it will take no more than 21 days for the committee to finish its work. "It could take less, however, as Sheetrit is looking at ways to streamline the committee's work," Ashkenazi added: "I want to visit the U.S. one month from now with all of these obligations behind me." Ashkenazi undertook to oversee the legislation's transfer to the Knesset as quickly as possible. He observed, however, that once it is placed before the Knesset, it will take some time before it is passed. The Ambassador responded that he had met one month earlier with Knesset Speaker Dahlia Itzhik, and impressed upon her the importance of having the DECA passed as quickly as possible. The Ambassador added that she seemed receptive.

15. (C) Regarding the export control division, Ashkenazi said that he had spent several hours with its director, Eli Pincu, and reviewed the entire licensing process, meeting all of the division's now-20 employees. "I know the entire process, and the staff understand the sensitivity of their work and the new procedures. There will be 30 employees eventually. The new division is well-connected, and its people know their jobs well. Now I just need to test the division to ensure that it meets my expectations," Ashkenazi said.

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MOD/IDF BUDGET WILL BE SECOND PRIORITY  
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16. (C) Ashkenazi indicated that his next main priority is to secure the best budget possible for the MOD and IDF. He recounted how, on August 23, he "stunned" the Prime Minister with his budget request: "The figures are huge, but we need the funds."

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RESULTS OF WAR WITH HIZBALLAH SHOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER  
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17. (C) Ashkenazi said that the biggest lesson learned so far after reviewing the management of the Israel-Hizballah War is that the results "could have, and should have been better."

He acknowledged that there were failures that would have to be fixed, and noted that IDF Chief of Staff LTG Halutz has already drawn up a plan to make the fixes. Ashkenazi said that the failures spanned many areas and resulted from many reasons, most having to do with how the war began, how targets were selected, and how targets were attacked. Ashkenazi said, "We know what we need to do concerning our reservists, our command and control, and our level of readiness. We need to provide the reservists more training. Our regular soldiers have also been too involved in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. We must also deal with the short-range rockets and anti-tank guided missiles." Ashkenazi lamented that, as a result of the war, Israel's internal political situation has been upset: "It is hard to know what the immediate future has in store for us. The current situation is very fragile."

¶18. (C) Ashkenazi said that although "nobody wants a second round in the immediate future," he believes that Israel needs to prepare for a second round with Hizballah and Syria, "because Syria must also pay for its role in this war." He said that Hizballah needs to re-group and re-arm, and claimed that it has "been instructed" to avoid conflict with the IDF for now and focus on re-armament. (NOTE: Ashkenazi did not indicate the source of such instructions to Hizballah. END NOTE.) "Hizballah is not worried about the Lebanese Armed Forces or the international force." The DG stressed that because of this, it is crucial that UNSCR 1701 be implemented to stop Syria's transfer of arms to Hizballah. Ashkenazi claimed that new transfers are already taking place, and said that Israel has not stopped the transfers because it does not want to use force at this time.

¶19. (C) On Lebanon, Ashkenazi said that the GOI and Lebanese PM Siniora share the same interests: "More so than other people can understand." Noting that he had spent several years himself in south Lebanon (Marjeyoun), Ashkenazi stressed that Israel must assist Siniora, as nobody else can take Lebanon "in the right direction." Ashkenazi noted that he had met with UN Special Envoy Terje Roed-Larsen the week of August 14 and discussed the lifting of Israel's blockade on Lebanon. Ashkenazi claimed that Roed-Larsen "expressed understanding" of Israel's concerns for enforcing the arms embargo. Ashkenazi mused that perhaps the embargo should be lifted in two phases. It could be lifted temporarily, and then re-instituted if Israel sees transfers taking place, or permanently lifted if the embargo holds. He added, "I think and believe that we will control the Lebanon-Syria border."

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ASHKENAZI PROMISES TO HELP SOLVE UXO, AMA PROBLEMS...  
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¶10. (C) Without prompting, Ashkenazi asked how Israel could be more helpful in the post-conflict situation. The Ambassador replied that humanitarian organizations would benefit from any maps that the IDF could provide identifying where unexploded ordnance may be located. Ashkenazi promised to deliver any such maps to the embassy's defense attache office for onward distribution. (NOTE: DAO Tel Aviv noted later in the day that UNIFIL had received and distributed these maps. END NOTE.) Ashkenazi said that Israel shot more than 100,000 artillery shells into Lebanon, and also used some multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRSs) that contain cluster munitions.

¶11. (C) The Ambassador also urged Ashkenazi to personally involve himself in implementation of the November 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access (AMA) brokered by Secretary Rice. The Ambassador recounted that DefMin Peretz had committed to making progress on the agreement. Ashkenazi replied that he is committed to the DefMin's policies, and is working on the AMA. He said he is thoroughly familiar with the AMA's background and history, that he receives regular updates, and that he had recently met with USSC General Dayton to discuss it and problems with the border-crossing at Karni.

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...AND TO PUSH FOR COMPLETION OF THE WESTERN BARRIER  
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¶12. (C) Noting that he was responsible for the security barrier in his previous position, Ashkenazi said that he will remain involved in the routing of the barrier: "I am dealing with the seamline and its outcomes. We will fix it in some places, and in other places, we will be forced by the Supreme Court to fix it. My aim is to close (complete) the fence. We save lives if we close the gaps." Ashkenazi expressed confidence that Israel can finish work on the western side of the barrier by the end of 2007. Expressing amazement that gaps remain around the overpasses near Maccabim and Modi'in, Ashkenazi said that he will take steps to secure agreement between Israeli and Palestinian landowners in those areas so that the gaps can be filled in. He added that his guiding principle for making route decisions was to put the fence where there are "many Israelis and few Palestinians."

¶13. (C) Ashkenazi agreed with the Ambassador that it would make sense to reduce checkpoints in the West Bank as gaps in the barrier are closed. Regarding the barrier around Jerusalem, Ashkenazi said he expects some difficulties, but said he felt he can buy time if he manages to close the barrier on the east side of Jerusalem. Ashkenazi also foresees that he will face some difficulties filling in the gaps near the village of Kedar, near Ma'ale Adumim, and in the stretch of wall south of Jerusalem on the way to Bethlehem. In some areas, he plans to erect the barrier along the green line, and then erect a second protective barrier around settlements along the line. He said that this is what was done in Tulkarim, that it would be a cheap way to fill in a gap quickly, and could also demonstrate to skeptics that the fence is a temporary security measure, and not meant to establish facts on the ground.

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ASHKENAZI ALARMED BY CONDITIONALITY ON LOAN GUARANTEES  
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¶14. (C) Responding to the Ambassador's question as to whether the GOI plans to remove illegal settlements and outposts, Ashkenazi said that the GOI cannot realistically address the issue at the moment. "The GOI is committed and capable," he explained, "but cannot do it now." When the Ambassador proposed that Ashkenazi consider budget cuts for settler activity in order to forestall equivalent reductions in extended U.S. loan guarantees, Ashkenazi and MOD POL-MIL Bureau Head Amos Gilad -- who sat alongside Ashkenazi in the meeting -- expressed surprise that the U.S. is prepared to reduce loan guarantees to offset what Israel spends on settlement activity. Ashkenazi undertook to explore further the issue of funding for settlements, and stressed that Olmert's government "wants to go beyond any previous government" when it comes to reducing the settler presence in the West Bank. When and how, he suggested, depends on timing: "When the Prime Minister mentioned convergence during the war, he was savaged." The Ambassador cautioned that as long as Israel has budget difficulties and seeks US assistance, the USG will watch carefully what the GOI cuts in its budget. If Israel continues spending on settlement activity, then the USG is required by law to reduce loan guarantees accordingly. However, if subsidies for settlements are eliminated, this would no longer be an issue. Ashkenazi expressed understanding, and urged the Ambassador to raise the matter with the PM Olmert and the Deputy PM Peres: "It is a big deal. We cannot have any misunderstanding on this."

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ASHKENAZI ON HIS PROPOSED VISIT TO THE U.S.  
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¶15. (C) Ashkenazi said that he has three main goals for his upcoming visit to the U.S.:

A) to review the steps the MOD has taken to transform

Israel's export control system;

B) to thank the officials who helped to supply Israel with its emergency requests for military equipment during the Israel-Hizballah War. Ashkenazi noted that he had already thanked, by telephone, Defense Under Secretary Edelman and Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs Hillen; and

C) to share with his interlocutors the GOI's views about the future after the war with Hizballah.

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JONES